

THE HEMP INDUSTRY.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

It is probable that American history does not present another such remarkable decline of an industry as that shown by the statistics of hemp growing. Fifty years ago this season the high-water mark of American hemp production was 14,000,000 pounds of fiber, more than half of which was produced in the State of Kentucky. To-day the annual production of the whole country amounts to less than one-sixth of what it was in 1859. In Kentucky in 1859, one county of the Blue Grass State produced as much hemp as the whole United States produces now.

The latest figures show that there are about 1,000 American farms on which hemp is grown to-day, with an average of 16.6 acres to the farm. The average yield per acre was 732 pounds. Kentucky has 88 per cent of the acreage and about the same proportion of the total crop is raised there. Sixty-nine out of every hundred pounds of hemp grown in the United States is grown in five counties of the Blue Grass region of the State, Illinois, Nebraska, and California grow nearly all the remaining 12 per cent of the American hemp crop.

The reason for the decline of hemp production is closely connected with the invention of the steamboat. When Runnymede and Fulton were inventing their steamboats they were signing the death warrant of the hemp industry. As sail power was swept from the seas by steam power the demand for canvas and rope fell off. Then came cheaper hemp from other quarters of the globe, and the decline of profits to a point below that which could be made cultivating other crops which will grow in Blue Grass soil.

It is the opinion of the Department of Agriculture that the American farmer is losing millions of dollars by the refusal of American hemp producers to use American hemp fiber in the making of binder twine. A score of years ago, when the consumption of binder twine was 10,000 tons a year, as compared with 15,000 tons to-day, the department estimated that if one-half of it had been made from American grown hemp the saving to the farmer would have amounted to \$1,750,000. But the twine makers would have nothing to do with the proposal of the department that American hemp fiber should be used. They declared it made a "soft twine," which was not as satisfactory as sisal or Manila twine. To this the department answered with a letter from a large harvester manufacturer, showing that American hemp twine worked as satisfactorily as any other in the operation of the harvesters. The efforts of the department never failed to restore American hemp twine to favor.

While the growth of hemp in the United States has become a negligible quantity, the importations of fiber have increased at a rapid rate. We are annually spending some \$15,000,000 for the 30,000 tons of sisal, grass and other imported fiber, besides other smaller items, and the importations are expected to increase more than ever before. The Manila hemp produced in the Philippines annually is equal in value to the purchase price of the islands.

The hemp industry in the Philippines had its birth some two and a half centuries ago. A monk of the Franciscan order, Padre Pedro Espinosa, impressed with the poverty of the people, set to work to train them in the growing of hemp and the separation of the fiber from the stalk. It is related that he experienced great difficulty in overcoming the natural laziness of the people, but that with certain rude instruments he was able to fashion them were able to do the work quite satisfactorily. These instruments have been in use without important change from that day to this.

The history of the hemp industry in the United States is an interesting one. Virginia tried to establish hemp growing in colonial times. At first it was enacted by the house of burgesses that as a preparation for war, the county courts should distribute to each tithable colonist a quart of flax seed and a quart of hemp seed, in return for which there should be given to the tithable master, after the next harvest, one pound of dressed flax and one pound of dressed hemp, or two pounds of either, at the option of the tithable colonist. The hemp seed was given to the people to-day. Even the editor of the Kentucky Gazette advertised that he would be glad to have subscriptions paid in hatched hemp. Kentuckians and there saw great value in hemp growing for Lexington by reason of its situation near the hemp fields. Ezekiel Niles declared in his Register that Lexington promised then to be the great inland city of the western world.

Henry Clay never reached greater heights of oratory than when he was talking of Kentucky hemp and Kentucky women. In one speech in Congress he told how the venerable Col. Shelby, hero of Kings Mountain, had his family clad by the labor of his own hands; how the spinning wheel and the loom were in motion at daybreak, and the matron delighted to show her friends the stores of goods laid aside for her daughters when they married.

"Let the painted dolls of our cities sneer at these things," he exclaimed. "The daughters of Isaac Shelby, whether the spinning wheel and the drawing-room, possess reason of its situation near the hemp fields. Ezekiel Niles declared in his Register that Lexington promised then to be the great inland city of the western world."

There was always a great desire on the part of the Kentucky hemp growers to excel the rest of the world in the excellence of their hemp. They were just as anxious that it should be stronger than Russian hemp as they were that their dross should outrun the Virginia thorn.

INDIGESTION!
QUIT THINKING
YOU CANNOT EAT
No matter your condition, try eating anything you like as much as when well, and while taking food slip
MAN-A-CEA WATER
the MAN-A-CEA Natural Spring Water.
Immediately Restores Good Digestion.
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Send for Booklet.

oughbreds. At one time they had a test on the Connecticut River between the Kentucky water-rotted hemp and the best Russian hemp. Each was made into rope two and a half inches in circumference, and the test applied. The Russian rope parted at 3,113 pounds strain. The Kentucky product broke at 3,209 pounds. No horse race won ever brought more joy to the hearts of Kentuckians than that test brought them. In all such tests the Kentucky hemp proved superior to the Russian product. At last it was decided to rig one side of the ship Constellation with rope from Kentucky hemp and the other with Russian hemp rope. After a two years' cruise the captain declared that if there was any preference it was in favor of the Russian. But the Kentucky rope was made from the water-rotted hemp, and the Navy Department has always declared water-rotted to be preferable to dew-rotted, and buys that kind to this day. Had the Constellation used the Kentucky water-rotted, every son of the Blue Grass State believes the American eagle would have vanquished the Russian bear in that contest.

The cut worm is one of the worst enemies of hemp. Col. Jack Chinn not long ago tried sowing salt to keep them off his fields. The cut worms disappeared, and most people concluded that the salt had proved efficacious. But subsequent similar experiments led to the conclusion that Col. Chinn's cut worms would have disappeared anyway. It is estimated that a crop of hemp requires twenty inches of rain in growing, or nearly a half million gallons per acre. Hemp harvest comes a hundred days after sowing. In Kentucky it is usually cut about frost time. In latter years this has been done by machinery. After it

has been cured and stacked or shocked, and the autumnal equinoctial storm set in, it is spread out and allowed to rot. When the fiber has thus been set free from the binding material of the stalk, it is gathered up and the breaking process begins. This is getting the fibre out of the stalk. From time out of mind the rate for breaking has been a cent a pound. Two hundred pounds is regarded as a good average, though some have gone as high as a hundred pounds an hour and 600 pounds a day. Experience counts more than main strength, but those who possess that quality will not impart it to others, not even to their own children, in many cases. The scarcity of labor has led to a great demand for machinery for the breaking of hemp, but as yet little progress has been made, and the little old two slatted hand break is still the favorite implement. There are some 300 patents on hemp-breaking machines registered in the patent office, but the one which fills the bill satisfactorily has not yet been invented.

The hemp seed business has been brought down to a specialized basis. Broom rape is the arch enemy of hemp, and in order to get pure seed much pains is taken. The dealers furnish the grower a gallon of seed in the spring in exchange for a bushel in the fall. When the frost season comes, each stalk of seed hemp is carefully cut to prevent a shattering of the seed. Three or four are stacked up together, and when they become dry the seed is beaten out into a sheet. The Chinese seed is so high priced that a person can profitably buy cloth to place around the stalks while yet standing in order to get the early seed.

The decline of shipping, the rise of jute, of sisal, and of Manila hemp have all had a hand in the decadence of American hemp growing. But the romance of it, growing always in a close association with blue grass and thoroughbred horses, can never decay. Member of the mulberry family, cousin-german of ramie and of hops, American hemp, in spite of its 32 per cent decline in production, still feels itself one of the blue bloods of the plant world and an aristocrat in the fiber kingdom.

(Copyright, 1909, by Frederic J. Haskin.)

To-morrow—Making Perfumery.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

O Alfred, of the withered bays, and harp of nice clean celluloid, why do you spend the passing days in singing of an aching void? Why sing a roundelay that means no more than Chocwot to a Turk? Is it because the magazines will pay you kopecks for your work? O Alfred, of the bloodless rhyme, that savors more of milk than fire, bethink you of the olden time when poets really smote the lyre, producing strains of noble swell, that touched and stirred the hearts of all, and made the soulful people yell and bat their heads against the wall! We listen to the songs you croon among the fogs across the sea; your poor old harp is out of tune, its strings were made in Germany. Far better poets roam the hills of this fair land, and feed on hope, and write wild songs of liver pills, or Jimson's Nonexplosive Soap.

(Copyright, 1909, by George Matthew Adams.)

LATEST FASHIONS.



2849
LADIES' TUCKED SHIRTWAIST.
Paris Pattern No. 2849
All Seams Allowed.

A simple style for a shirtwaist of Persian or Victorian lawn, Italian linen, madras, batiste, nainsook or China silk is here shown. The fullness of the front is distributed in narrow tucks, either side of the bodice, or the tucks being about yoke depth, that of the back being stitched to the waist line. The rather tight-fitting sleeves are made with groups of tucks at regular intervals; the lower edge being finished in a point, and trimmed with insertion and lace edging. The neck may be finished with a Dutch collar, which should be scalloped and hand-embroidered, or a high collar of the material trimmed with the insertion and edging may be worn. The pattern is in sizes—22 to 42 inches, bust measure. For 35 bust the waist requires 4 1/2 yards of material 20 inches wide, 3 1/2 yards 27 inches wide, 3 1/2 yards 35 inches wide, or 3 1/2 yards 42 inches wide; 1/2 yard of insertion and 1 yard of edging.

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